

**Dear Neighbor,**

This is a time of year when our thoughts and activities are centered more than usual on family and friends. It's more true this year than ever. Since September 11, it seems that everyone is re-examining personal priorities, and finding that some things that felt so important really aren't, and that others that we took for granted, like spending time with our children and grandchildren, are truly precious.

Here on Capitol Hill we are also rethinking our priorities. Assuring the security and personal safety of Americans has moved to the top of the agenda. We are addressing airline safety, bio-terrorism, and all of the many issues that fall under the category of "homeland security". We have given the President bipartisan support in his role as Commander in Chief and support the efforts of our armed services to stop terrorism. Economic security - how to stimulate an economy that is now officially in recession, and how to help those who have lost their jobs and their health insurance - is being vigorously debated in the Congress.

When making the critical decisions that are before the House of Representatives, I always come down on the side of protecting the interests of everyday people first. I support an economic stimulus package that puts money in the pockets of people who will go out and spend the money to actually stimulate the economy, rather than lavishing huge tax breaks on big corporations. We should help individuals and small businesses that have been devastated by the 9-11 attack because that's good for them and good for the economy. I support investments in a long-neglected public health system and in local first responders, including fire and police departments.

When fighting terrorism, I believe that we must strike the right balance between giving law enforcement important new tools it needs to find and destroy terrorist networks and protect our precious civil liberties. And I support all efforts to prevent hate crimes and acts of bigotry that are on the increase here at home since September 11.

Finally, to those of you who have written letters to my Washington office expressing your views or making a request, you should know that our office has received no written mail since October 15. All of the mail has been held back, and it may be several weeks before we see it, that includes thousands of surveys that were sent back. New mail screening measures will add 2 to 3 weeks for future DC deliveries. **I would urge you to e-mail or fax us if possible, or mail to the District offices to be sure that your message is received.** It is always good to hear from you, whether or not we agree.

I wish you a peaceful, joyful and healthy year.

Sincerely,  
S  
Jan Schakowsky